1. (Amended) An answering machine detection method for a voice message delivery system comprising the steps of:

    (a) placing an outbound call to a Recipient;

    (b) detecting a telephone line pick-up; and

    (c) detecting a difference at a voice message server between an existing answering machine telephone line pick-up and a live Recipient telephone line pick-up.

15. (Amended) An apparatus for detecting an answering machine for a voice message delivery system including a TeleMail Server connectable to a telephone communications system, wherein the TeleMail Server operates to:

    (a) place an outbound call to a Recipient;

    (b) detect a telephone line pick-up; and

    (c) detect a difference at a voice message server between an existing answering machine telephone line pick-up and a live Recipient telephone line pick-up.

21. (New) An answering machine detection method for a voice message delivery system comprising the steps of:

    (a) placing an outbound call to a Recipient;

    (b) detecting a telephone line pick-up; and

    (c) automatedly detecting a difference between an existing answering machine telephone line pick-up and a live Recipient telephone line pick-up.

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1.   (Amended) An answering machine detection method for a voice message delivery system comprising the steps of:

(a)   placing an outbound call to a Recipient;

(b)   detecting a telephone line pick-up; and

(c)   detecting a difference at a voice message server between an existing answering machine telephone line pick-up and a live Recipient telephone line pick-up.

2.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises:

(c1)   playing a prompt;

(c2)   listening for talk-over during the playing of the prompt;

(c3)   determining the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine if there is talk-over during the playing of the prompt.

3.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 2, and further comprising the steps of:

(d)   waiting for silence if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine;

(e)   playing a message if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine;

(f)   playing a message if the telephone line pick-up was by a live Recipient.

4.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 3, and further comprising the steps of:

(g)   detecting talk-over during playing of the message if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine;

(h)   restarting the playing of the message if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine and talk-over is detected during playing of the message.

5.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 3, wherein step (e) comprises:

(e)   playing a first message if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine;

and further wherein step (f) comprises:

(f)   playing a second message different from the first message if the telephone line pick-up was by a live Recipient.

6.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 3, wherein step (f) comprises:

(f)   playing a message and playing at least one interactive option if the telephone line pick-up was by a live Recipient.

7.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 3, wherein step (f) comprises:

(f)   playing at least one interactive reject option, playing a message and playing at least one interactive option if the telephone line pick-up was by a live Recipient.

8.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises:

(c1)   playing a prompt that requests a touch-tone input;

(c2)   listening for the requested touch-tone input;

(c3)   determining the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine if the requested touch-tone input is heard.

9.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 1, wherein step (c) comprises:

(c1)   playing a prompt that requests a specific speech input;

(c2)   listening for the requested specific speech input;

(c3)   determining the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine if the requested specific speech input is heard.

10.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 2, wherein step (c1) comprises:

(c1)   playing a prompt within one second of detecting a telephone line pick-up.

11.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 2, wherein step (c1) comprises:

(c1a)   detecting voice energy after detecting a telephone line pick-up;

(c1b)   playing a prompt within one second of detecting voice energy.

12.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 2, wherein step (c1) comprises:

(c1a)   detecting voice energy and the end of voice energy after detecting a telephone line pick-up;

(c1b)   playing a prompt within one second of detecting the end of the voice energy.

13.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 2, wherein step (c1) comprises:

(c1)   playing a prompt that introduces a call to a live Recipient.

14.   The answering machine detection method of Claim 2, wherein step (c1) comprises:

(c1)   playing a prompt that introduces a call to a live Recipient by playing a prompt selected from the group consisting of: "This is a message from [Sender's name]"; "This is a call from [Sender's name]; and "[Sender's name] has sent you a message."

15.   (Amended) An apparatus for detecting an answering machine for a voice message delivery system including a TeleMail Server connectable to a telephone communications system, wherein the TeleMail Server operates to:

(a)   place an outbound call to a Recipient;

(b)   detect a telephone line pick-up; and

(c)   detect a difference at a voice message server between an existing answering machine telephone line pick-up and a live Recipient telephone line pick-up.

16.   The apparatus for detecting an answering machine for a voice message delivery system of Claim 15, wherein a TeleMail Server in step (c) operates to:

(c1)   play a prompt;

(c2)   listen for talk-over during the playing of the prompt;

(c3)   determine the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine if there is talk-over during the playing of the prompt.

17.   The apparatus for detecting an answering machine for a voice message delivery system of Claim 16, wherein the TeleMail Server additionally operates to:

(d) wait for silence if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine;

(e) play a message if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine;

(f) play a message if the telephone line pick-up was by a live Recipient.

18. The apparatus for detecting an answering machine for a voice message delivery system of Claim 17, wherein the TeleMail Server additionally operates to:

(g) detect talk-over during playing of the message if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine;

(h) restart the playing of the message if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine and talk-over is detected during playing of the message.

19. The apparatus for detecting an answering machine for a voice message delivery system of Claim 17, wherein the TeleMail Server in step (e) operates to:

(e) play a first message if the telephone line pick-up was by an existing answering machine;

and further wherein the TeleMail Server in step (f) operates to:

(f) play a second message different from the first message if the telephone line pick-up was by a live Recipient.

20. The apparatus for detecting an answering machine for a voice message delivery system of Claim 17, wherein the TeleMail Server in step (f) operates to:

(f)   play a message and play at least one interactive option if the telephone line pick-up was by a live Recipient.

21.   (New) An answering machine detection method for a voice message delivery system comprising the steps of:

(a)   placing an outbound call to a Recipient;

(b)   detecting a telephone line pick-up; and

(c)   automatedly detecting a difference between an existing answering machine telephone line pick-up and a live Recipient telephone line pick-up.